

Rehabilitation of keeper's house set to begin at Fenwick Island Lighthouse

(DOVER, Del.—April 23, 2018)—Beginning this spring and continuing into the summer of 2018, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will be conducting rehabilitation work on the exterior of the keeper's house of the Fenwick Island Lighthouse located at the intersection of 146th St. and West Oliver Circle in Fenwick Island, Del. The lighthouse complex is managed by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs which leases it to the [New Friends of the Fenwick Island Lighthouse](#).



Fenwick Island Lighthouse complex. The keeper's house is on the left.

The rehabilitation project will involve the removal of modern additions, construction of a new porch and new wooden steps and landings, replacement of existing windows, repair of miscellaneous wood trim and wood-shingle siding, exterior

painting, and the re-laying of the existing brick sidewalk. Future improvement plans call for the provision of access to the first floor of the building for people with disabilities, improved pedestrian circulation on the exterior, and connectivity to the lighthouse property. Once these improvements have been completed, the building will be used by the New Friends of the Fenwick Island Lighthouse to provide information about the history of the lighthouse and the role played by the light keepers in addition to providing public access to the lighthouse.

During rehabilitation of the keeper's house, the division will work with the construction contractor and the New Friends of the Fenwick Island Lighthouse to limit inconvenience to the public, and the lighthouse itself will remain open during its posted operating hours. Residents and visitors will see the usual presence of equipment, materials and workers on site as well as the usual noises that go with construction work during daytime hours. No weekend work is anticipated.

The Fenwick Island Lighthouse was built in 1858 to protect shipping from the Fenwick sand shoals that extend several miles out from the Delaware coast. It began service in 1859 and continued in operation without interruption for nearly 120 years until Dec. 13, 1978 when it was decommissioned by the U. S. Coast Guard. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Due to a grassroots effort, ownership of the property was transferred to the State of Delaware in 1981, and the lighthouse was re-lit in 1982 as an unofficial, private aid to navigation.

The keeper's house, the second to be built on the property, was constructed in 1882 to relieve overcrowding in the original house. It was designed in Victorian Gothic style with gable- and rafter-end decoration typical of much coastal-area government construction in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#) is an agency of the State of Delaware. The division enhances Delaware's quality of life by preserving the state's unique historical heritage, fostering community stability and economic vitality and providing educational programs and assistance to the general public on Delaware history and heritage. The division's diverse array of services includes operation of five museums which are accredited by the [American Alliance of Museums](#), administration of the State Historic Preservation Office, conservation of the state's archaeological and historic-objects collections, operation of a conference center and management of historic properties across the state. Primary funding for division programs and services is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, a federal agency. However, the contents and opinions expressed in the division's programs and services do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior.

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